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[name of health district] **ANNOUNCES PROBABLE HUMAN CASE OF WEST NILE VIRUS**

([location], Va.) - [Title, name and credentials of Health Director] announced today that a probable human case of West Nile virus has been identified. Further laboratory tests are being done by Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services (DCLS) to confirm that the persons' illness is due the West Nile virus.

The case involves a [city or county location] resident who is between [age range] years old. The individual was hospitalized and is still recovering. Laboratory samples were collected on [date] and tested as presumptive positive by the state's DCLS on [date].

"The risk of illness from West Nile virus exists even for healthy people, but people over 50-years old and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to become seriously ill than others," said [name and title of spokesperson]. "This is a reminder to people of the importance of eliminating mosquito breeding areas around the home and protecting themselves from mosquito bites."

[Name and title of additional spokesperson], said this probable West Nile virus case reinforces the message the District is sending to combat the disease. "West Nile virus is still a health concern for us. The Health Department will continue educating citizens on how to protect themselves and conduct activities to control mosquito populations in the District," [spokesperson name].

There were 5 human cases of the virus reported last year and no deaths here in Virginia. Most people bitten by an infected mosquito do not get sick. People who do get sick usually suffer a mild flu-like illness. Few people suffer serious illness, such as encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain or spinal cord).

If you are bitten by a mosquito, you do not need to see a doctor. Most people who suffer a mild illness due to West Nile virus recover, and no treatment is necessary. Only supportive treatment is available for more serious cases. Human testing, involving blood and spinal fluid, is usually only conducted on people with encephalitis or meningitis and it can take several weeks to get results.

The Virginia Department of Health recommends the following tips to reduce exposure to mosquitoes:

- Wear long, loose and light-colored clothing.
- Use insect repellent products with no more than 50 percent DEET for adults and up to 30 percent for children. Follow instructions when using insect repellents.
- Turn over or remove containers in your yard where water collects, such as old tires, potted plant trays, buckets and toys.
- Eliminate standing water on tarps or flat roofs.
- Clean out birdbaths and wading pools once a week.
- Clean roof gutters and downspout screens regularly.

For more information on West Nile virus, log onto the Virginia Department of Health's Web site at www.vdh.virginia.gov.

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